



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWO FROM TEXAS SENTENCED ON COCAINE CHARGE

TOPEKA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Vicente J. Melenderz, 26, Grand Prairie, Texas, and Benjamin C. Reyes, 26, Dallas, Texas, were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Julie A. Robinson. Melenderz was sentenced to five years and three months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by three years of supervised release. Reyes was sentenced to twenty years in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by ten years of supervised release.**

Melgren said that Melenderz and Reyes each entered a guilty plea on June 16, 2003, to one count of possession with the intent to distribute cocaine. Reyes faced a minimum of twenty years and a maximum of life based on his prior criminal history.

Melgren stated that on June 13, 2002, the Lyon County Sheriff's Department stopped a silver Ford Windstar minivan, driven by Melenderz with Reyes as a passenger, on I-35 near Emporia, for a traffic violation. The officers searched the minivan and found approximately 10.8 kilograms (approximately 23.76 pounds) of cocaine hidden inside the rear door secured in place with expandable foam insulation. Melenderz and Reyes each had stains on their clothing matching the expandable foam insulation.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the Lyon County Sheriff's Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration in this investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Mattivi in this prosecution.